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LETTER DATED 19 MAY 1999 FROM THE CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Acting on instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of a letter dated 19 May 1999 from Mr. Mohammed Said Al-Sahaf, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq, dealing with the incursions that the Turkish army continues to make into northern Iraq, causing much loss of human life and considerable damage to the property of Iraqi citizens who are sons of the Kurdish people and to public facilities. In this letter, the Iraqi Minister for Foreign Affairs asks you to ask the Turkish Government to abide by the principles of the Charter and to withdraw its armed forces immediately from Iraqi territory.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Rokan Hama AL-ANBUGE
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

ANNEX

Letter dated 19 May 1999 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq addressed to the Secretary-General

Further to my letter of 12 May 1999, I wish to bring to your attention the following facts: on 16 May 1999, units of the Turkish army consisting of 15,000 soldiers and hundreds of men belonging to village militia, supported by tanks, fighter planes and helicopters, penetrated into Iraqi territory towards the sectors of Mashruk, Batufa, Kani Masi, Kaychan and Matina. These units came from the Uludere region in the Turkish province of Sirnak. Their incursions caused much loss of human life and considerable damage to the property of Iraqi citizens, who are sons of the Kurdish people living in the region, and to public facilities.

The Government of the Republic of Iraq strongly condemns the violations of its territorial integrity and airspace committed by the Turkish army. It urges the Turkish Government to withdraw its troops immediately from within Iraqi territory and to put an end to its practices which are contrary to the rules of good neighbourliness, the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. In addition, it categorically rejects the pretexts and excuses used by Turkey to justify its incursions into northern Iraq. The fact that it wants to chase elements accused of interfering with its security in no way authorizes Turkey to pursue its current policy which is in complete contradiction with the statements it had made regarding its attachment to Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The problems which Turkey is having are primarily due to the persistence of the unhealthy situation which the United States and Great Britain have imposed in the region, together with the Turkish Government.

While reserving the right to demand reparation for the injury suffered as a result of the illegal practices described above, the Government of the Republic of Iraq appeals once more to the Government of the Republic of Turkey to put an end to these operations which infringe on Iraq's sovereignty and imperil its security and its integrity. Furthermore, it asks Turkey to demonstrate, by concrete actions, that it respects the rules of good neighbourliness between States.

In the hope that the United Nations will fulfil its responsibilities under the Charter by speaking out against the continuing threats and aggression of which my country is a victim, I urge you to do all within your power to ask the Turkish Government to abide by the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the rules of international law and to withdraw its armed forces immediately from Iraqi territory.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mohammed Said AL-SAHAF
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Iraq